



## ABOUT THIS TASK FORCE

The NACURH Task Force on Social and Diversity Issues was commissioned by NACURH National Chair Mike Marshall. The task force was charged with investigating social and diversity problems, concerns, and matters across the NACURH network. The goals of the task force were as follows:

- 1) Publish a monthly newsletter
- 2) Make and distribute a national case study
- 3) Write an article for the NACURH Link
- 4) Create and facilitate a program for NACURH 2007

In December 2006 we published our first newsletter and chose to focus on the status of diversity in higher education. Each task force member researched 20 schools in one or two regions of NACURH. We compiled information on student diversity statistics, institutional offices of diversity, and university definitions of diversity. Over 130 schools were researched from across the U.S. and Canada. We continued our newsletter throughout the year, distributing 5 digital issues and this final hard copy issue. **This issue is comprised of what we think are the best articles we have published all year.**

In January 2007 we presented a case study in our newsletter which detailed a difficult scenario involving Facebook and freedom of speech. One school in particular presented a solution that satisfied the Task Force, and they will be receiving a certificate during the NACURH awards ceremony on Sunday evening.

In March 2007 we submitted an article on minority recruitment at college campuses for the NACURH Link. The hard work of the Task Force is reflected in the quality of this article.

At this conference we will be presenting a unique program called **Intersections of Diversity: Stepping Beyond Superficiality**, where we will challenge the way you think about diversity. Come support all of the hard work this task force has done this year, and if you see any of the members listed on the back page congratulate them for their immense efforts.

## WHO WANTS A CONFERENCE ROMANCE?

BY DARYL LAWRENCE - MACURH RCC OF MINNESOTA AND SANDM (MARCH 2007)

Conferences are special times. You get to hang out with people you get to see three times a year, expand your leadership horizons by attending outstanding programs, and recognize your peers for their achievements. However, sometimes the love bug bites. That's when things get interesting.

Here in MACURH we call them Conference Romances, or CRs for short. NEACURH calls them Conference Hookups, or CoHos. In general, they are looked down upon. Conferences are times for growing as a leader, not for dating, right? Maybe. At conference, you are surrounded by tons of people who are as motivated and committed as you are. It isn't out-of-the-ordinary to be attracted to someone who has, in essence, the same qualities you admire in yourself. While I can't sanction CRs, I can see how they are both plausible and possible.

However, this doesn't mean that CRs should happen. Responsible student leaders should be focused on the conference, not on each other. Taking time out of the conference schedule to let a CR blossom necessarily detracts from the core principle of that conference - developing as a student leader. Personally, I have no problem with relationships developing outside of conferences. That is your time to dispense with. But when you are at a regional or national conference and pursuing a CR, you are using

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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST


- NACURH.org publishes all of our newsletters online. Check out NBD publications to access our previous issues!
- Two Task Force members are Director-Elects and one was awarded NCC of the Year!
- If you want to get involved or seek more information please contact us on the back page!
- We hope to be back next year!

Next Issue: To Be Announced

## WHO WANTS A CONFERENCE ROMANCE? (CONTINUED)

the region's or the nation's time to advance your social life. I think that is where the greatest misconception occurs. Relationships are a healthy part of life- but they are not necessarily conducive to focusing on the tasks at hand at a conference. You might miss something important while you're making eyes at someone across the boardroom.

I know this article isn't going to stop the vast majority of you from having a CR. But do you really want to run the risk of catching a CTD or having a C-Baby? If you do choose to ignore my humble advice of focusing on the conference, I urge you to be smart.

All I really want of all of you is responsible behavior. Remember why you are at a conference and whom you represent. You are leaders on your campus who make good decisions - why else would you be involved in NACURH? So take a second and think about your purpose at a conference. Is it to have a hook-up? No. It's to represent your school well and bring back resources to your campus. So please, hold the urges back from three weekends a year and focus. Only you can prevent CRs. 

## INCRIMINATED BY FACEBOOK

BY MARLEY BLONSKY - UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON NCC (JANUARY 2007)

The other day in my women and law class a study group was forming. In the short time we had, we couldn't quite figure out when and where we could meet to study for the final. I suggested that I would just Facebook everybody and let them know the final decision. One of my classmates, however, looked up incredibly confused and said "What?" This brought up an interesting quandary. How do I explain to my classmate, who granted must have been living under a rock for the past three years, what Facebook is? On the walk out of the classroom, another girl and I tried to explain it: "It's like Myspace, but for college students...except not really," or "It's a stalking site where you can find your crush from kindergarten." And finally we left her with the website and told her to sign up and explore it for herself.

Facebook, with its inception in 2004, has rapidly grown from being open to only a few Ivy League schools to having over 13 million registered users. For me personally, Facebook has been an amazing tool for both my personal and professional life, but has also forced me to reevaluate some decisions I have made.

According to its website, "Facebook is a social utility that enables people to understand the world around them." As the Programming Director for the University of Washington's Residence Hall Student Association (RHSA) last year, I constantly used Facebook as a free advertising and networking tool. Every event we planned was advertised on Facebook which could track who was planning on coming and could provide a quick update to our attendees if any details had changed. In this regard, Facebook was a God-send; quick, free, easy information dissemination to a campus of over 40,000—sign me up!!

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*This incident caused unprecedented uproar not only on our campus but also around the nation as the story was featured on Good Morning America and The Today Show. Students hired lawyers to fight for the right to privacy and argued that administrators had broken the law.*


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I quickly learned, however, that Facebook also has its downfalls. Facebook is built on open-source software which basically means it is constantly changing and "improving." One of these updates came in late 2005 with the integration of photo-sharing abilities. Never before had there been such easy access to so many photos—many of which admittedly featured an array of illegal activity. Soon thereafter, universities and colleges around the nation were faced with this new issue: could students be disciplined for photos online? Policies around the country vary but I can tell you from personal experience—it's best to assume that anything put on Facebook is essentially like posting the picture on your Residence Hall Director's Door.

It was January 2006, the Seahawks were in the Superbowl and life was good. I received an invitation, via Facebook of course, to attend a Superbowl party in one of the on-campus apartments. Going against my better judgment, I attended. The party was fun; granted there was alcohol and noise, but largely without incident and with no documentation by any RAs. We figured we were in the clear and without thinking, many party attendees put pictures online of the party—showing a keg, underage drinking, and basically clear evidence of a number of policies being broken. About a month later everybody at the party received a subpoena to the resident director's office to discuss our actions at the party. To make a long story short, the pictures that were posted on Facebook had directly incriminated all of us and we were thus responsible for our actions. Sanctions ranged from three RAs losing their jobs, to probation for knowingly present violations, to alcohol education classes.

This incident caused unprecedented uproar not only on our campus but also around the nation as the story was featured on Good Morning America and The Today Show. Students hired lawyers to fight for the right to privacy and argued that essentially, because the site at the time was limited to students, that the administrators who created fake accounts to access the pictures had broken the law. In the end the students lost, but the whole experience proved to be a learning experience for all. The University of Washington Residence Halls have now incorporated internet content into the contract and many students are much more aware of the consequences putting pictures on Facebook can have.

Policies vary around the country as to content on Facebook. Some schools have gone to so far as to ban any staff or faculty from having Facebook accounts, even if they existed from previous institutions. At other schools, if the pictures are from an incident off campus, they won't do anything about it.

Regardless of your school's policy it is important to take note of a few basic Facebook safety precautions. Remember that Facebook is no longer limited to just schools; companies, regions, future employers, even your parents can join! Think about who you want seeing your pictures and content and make use of the privacy options. Facebook has multiple privacy settings—take advantage of them and just remember finally that whatever you put up there is essentially public. 

# DIVERSE TERMINOLOGY

BY TONY FANGEL - NEW YORK UNIVERSITY IRHC ADVISOR (DECEMBER 2006)

Almost every Office of Residence Life knows that choice of language matters; just walk into a job interview and sputter the word “dorm,” and you will be sure to remain fancifully unemployed. Using “dorm” sends a completely different message than “residence hall,” which is why the vernacular has changed over the years. Although this vocabulary is standard at colleges and universities across the country, the terminology surrounding student diversity is, well, quite diverse.

In the past decade or so there has been a call to make university campuses more diverse. Diversity, it is argued, enhances the student experience inside and outside of the classroom. As such, many offices and vice presidents for student diversity have been popping up around the nation. The missions of these offices are crucial to the development of the student, but the language in the title of the office can also send a salient message. Have you noticed that your university’s offices change names about every three years? This is why.

As far as offices for diversity, their names run the gamut. Some are simple and to the point such as Southeastern Oklahoma State University’s *Office of Diversity*, or the more common *Office for Institutional Diversity*. These offices most likely deal with all areas of diversity – age, religion, sexuality, race, ethnicity, ability, marital status, veteran status, gender, socioeconomic class, political beliefs, national origin, and others. Other offices seem to have a more specific focus: University of Nebraska’s *Office of Equity, Access, & Diversity Programs* and Cal Poly Pomona’s *Office of Diversity and Compliance* are just a couple of the many. These offices seem to have an air of policy and law to them, even with the word “programs” affixed to the end of UNL’s office. From a student’s perspective these offices might be intimidating and inaccessible whereas offices like the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s *Diversity Education Center* might seem more welcoming simply from the name.

Other schools have offices that appear more obvious in their mission. The University of Nevada-Reno and Southwest Minnesota State’s *Offices for Student Cultural Diversity* and the University of Toronto’s *Anti-racism and Cultural Diversity Office* insist that race and ethnicity are the urgent tenets of diversity. Perhaps this putative link is why 38 of the universities researched have an *Office of Multicultural Affairs* or some equivalent rather than an office of general diversity. It is fair to note that some of the schools that have a multicultural office also have LGBT offices, disability services offices, offices for women, and Willmington College in Delaware even has a *Veteran Affairs Office*. Interestingly, although Toronto uses both “race” and “diversity” in the name of its office, it is the only of the six Canadian universities researched that has any kind of diversity or multicultural office.

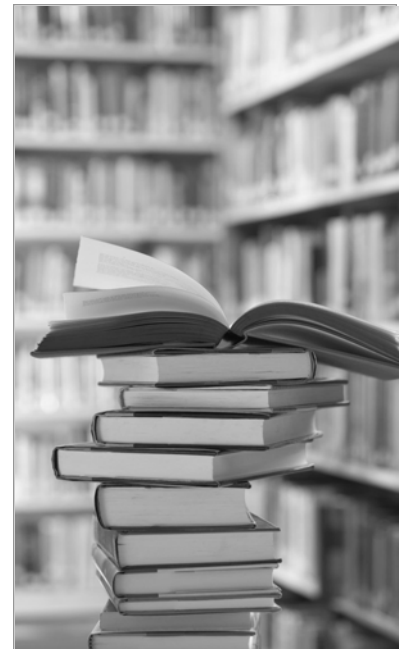
Perhaps even more important than the names of the offices themselves, universities continually report statistics and facts about their student diversity, using multiple terminologies to describe their populations. All of these statistics were found either on university “fast fact” pages or in the universities’ institutional research factbooks. The language used in the categorization of students is important because it needs to be accurate, useful, and understandable. After researching over 130 colleges and universities nationwide, student population statistics were found for 101 of them. These schools come from all regions of NACURH, including six schools from Canada.

Of these 101 schools which statistics were found, 92 reported some statistic on race and/or ethnicity. However, the terminology used in describing these students is far from consistent. Forty of the 92 schools (43%) used simply “ethnicity” to describe this category of statistic. This is simple, common, and usually quite understandable – ethnicity refers to a person’s cultural, lingual, racial, behavioral, and perhaps religious heritage. Missouri State University uses “ethnic category” which may be even more appropriate, insisting that the categories they are using are meant for simplicity of research (or universality between schools) rather than 100% accuracy. Seven schools revise this further by using “racial/ethnic category.” Northwestern puts more emphasis on those surveyed by using “ethnic identity” – apparently to free students from what could feel like automatic outward categorization into one of the pre-defined ethnic groups. The University of Georgia uses “ethnic origin” seemingly to separate one’s current ethnicity with their original ethnicity.

A number of schools (12) reported the number of “minority students” on campus and some from there listed racial breakdowns. “Minority” here is being used to refer to racial minority, but that is not what is written. Speaking most generally there are religious minorities (atheists), class minorities (those below the poverty line), sexual minorities (LGBT), ability minorities (those that are disabled), etc. Seven schools including Colorado State University modified this terminology to read “ethnic minorities.” This better reflects the statistic they are trying to report. A number of other schools (7), most of them in the south apart from Northern Michigan University and Ball State, use the term “race” alone. One school notes that this term is used to remain in line with the National Center for Education Statistics. Although the term is easily understandable and fairly simple, it may not be useful considering that race usually only means common physical characteristics of people. Even less popular and possibly less useful (or even offensive) is the term “students of color,” which only Washington State University, Oregon State University, the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, and the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota still use in their student population statistics.

There are other universities that use terminology that is ambiguous and disconcerting. Three schools in California use “campus diversity” to quantify their racial minority students. One can hope that the only diversity their campuses have is not racial. Similarly, the University of Central Oklahoma uses the term “student diversity” to describe only the racial composition of its students and Seton Hall reports their “diversity rate” to be 30 percent. This is more evidence that schools are defining diversity solely by race. If real diversity could be measured with a number it remains to be seen how that would be possible. Six schools from Washington University in St. Louis to the University of Tulsa all use the term “multicultural students” or “students from multicultural backgrounds.” It is conceivable that a student could be multicultural; someone could have a Spanish family that grew up in France. However, as is evident from the statistics reported, this is not what these schools mean – the term is ambiguous.

The most insulting and even pejorative statistic comes from the University of Utah’s 2006-2007 Viewbook for New Students. On page eight it lists as part of the freshman profile, “Self-identified racial/ethnic students” to be 16.6%. Assuming no students would ever call themselves “racial” or “ethnic,” one has to assume Utah means “racial/ethnic minorities.” Using “racial/ethnic students” when you mean “minorities” pre-



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## DIVERSE TERMINOLOGY (CONTINUED)

sumes that those in the majority lack any ethnicity or race – something to which the majority would undoubtedly object.

Further, in all of these categorizations of race and ethnicity, every school but one used some form of “white” to describe Anglo-Americans. Almost half of the schools researched that classified with the term “ethnicity” used “white” alone, without “non-Hispanic” or “Caucasian” attached. Of the schools that did this, only seven used “black” alone. Over ten schools did attach “non-Hispanic” to the term, however, and six schools used “Caucasian” alone. The University of Nebraska and Central Michigan are daring and provocative, enough to lump “unreported” or “unknown” ethnicities into the same statistic as “white,” rather than having its own number. The Universities of Iowa and Wisconsin go even further and openly exclude “white” or any instantiation of it altogether in their statistics on student ethnicity. The seven schools that used the term “race” all used simply “black” and “white.” Notably, one school – The University of California-Santa Cruz – decided to use “Euro-American” instead of any form of “white.” This is a step in the right direction, although replacing white with Euro-American does not take into account those typically included in “white”: Arab-Americans, Russians, North-Africans, South Africans, Middle Eastern-Americans, among others.

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*“If real diversity could be measured with a number it remains to be seen how that would be possible.”*


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Luckily, race and ethnicity are not the only aspect of diversity, and there is broad consensus among terminologies in the rest of the field. Of the 39 schools that included diversity statistics on students from outside the United States, all but two used the term “international students.” One school opted to use “international citizens” while the University of Nebraska chose to use “foreign students.” There is not much tactile difference between these terms, though “foreign” has a negative connotation. Twenty-three schools included “age” in their diversity statistics, and over 20 included “Part-time/full-time status.” There was little to no variety in the terminology of these classifications. An overwhelming number of schools (43) included “gender” in their categorization of student diversity. Only three universities (Kansas, Tulane, and Georgia) chose to use the term “sex” instead. Sociologists usually define sex as the biological aspects of sexuality whereas gender comprises the sociological aspects. All 46 schools used “male” and “female” as the only possible responses in this category, except for the University of Minnesota which also included “NA.” It is not defined whether NA means “Not Applicable,” “Not Available,” or “No Answer,” but Minnesota is the only school researched which gives transgender, intersex, and other students an option outside the traditional sex binary.

There is quite a bit of disparity when discussing where students come from in the United States, however the differences do not pose much of a meaningful distinction. Sixteen of the schools that use this statistic prefer the term “geographic origin,” “geographic region,” or “regional origin” while many (9) use simply “residency.” A handful schools (7) prefer “out-of-state students” and three schools use “origin of students” to refer to which state they are from. Some of these terms include international students, whereas “residency” is usually broken down into residents and non-residents, which could be confusing to some. The University of Alberta uses “home address” and Central Michigan uses “permanent residence” to simplify things. The University of California-Santa Cruz categorizes with “hometown,” presumably to give a sense of nostalgia. But although terms vary and over 10 schools include breakdowns by county, all of these terms are pretty straightforward when coupled with the accompanying statistics.

In a final note, there were a few schools that included religious diversity in their statistics – all of them religiously affiliated. Perhaps most surprising is the lack in categorization of student diversity statistics. Kansas University was the only school of the 101 that had attainable student population statistics which reported any type of “marital status.” What is even more shocking is the fact that not a single school in this sample reported any statistics on socioeconomic class. The closest thing to it was the amount of money spent on need-based aid. Almost all of the schools researched report race/ethnicity, most include gender, and almost half report regional origin but there is not much else commonly used in student diversity statistics.

Maybe, just maybe, colleges and universities are too often equating diversity with racial diversity. The terminology of offices and statistics suggests so. It does not take much to look north of the border and realize that Canada does not have this problem; of the six Canadian schools that were researched, only Toronto has a diversity office but not a single school reported any student diversity statistics on race or ethnicity. However, statistics were reported on age, gender, international students, geographic origin, and home address. In fact, besides Toronto the only school to even mention the word “diversity” on any of its administrative websites is the University of Guelph in Ontario.

The message is clear; the words colleges and universities use on their websites, in their statistics, and in their reports are crucial to the understanding of the status of diversity in higher education. Some schools are careful and articulate while others are haphazard and inexact. If a school means “diversity” then treat it as such. Student diversity is important to students and administrators alike – but one person alone cannot be diversity, whether they are 45, agnostic, part-time, black, out-of-state, deaf, blue-collar, married, pansexual, a resident alien, affiliated with the Green Party, or a Vietnam veteran. 

## THAT’S SO GAY!

BY JESSICA KNOX - UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-GREEN BAY NRHH CC (MARCH 2007)

Does that offend you? It does? Well, that’s retarded. You’re such a fag for letting that bother you. Oh look, you’re reading this with dial up internet, that’s so ghetto. Did someone Jew out on you so now you’re broke? Man, you got gypped.

Are you offended? Or are these phrases a part of your everyday vocabulary? These phrases have worked their way into our everyday life and have become slang across the globe. Five and six year olds use the terms “gay,” “faggot,” and “retarded” to lob insults at one another and by the time they reach middle school “faggot” has become the most humiliating insult a person can receive, according to a survey of middle school

boys conducted by the American Association of University Women. Even though these are common phrases for us to use or hear, the exact definitions of them seem to be a little fuzzy.

“That’s retarded” is often meant to say something is stupid or rubbish. According to dictionary.com “retarded” actually means “to cause to move or proceed slowly.” “That’s so ghetto” becomes a little unclear in what people use it for. Some see it as a way to associate something with a minority. Others see it as a way to describe something that’s cheap or old. “Ghetto” is actually of European Jewish heritage. It was a rundown place where people were forced to live. The origin of this word being used in the present day slang comes from this definition because the Jewish were seen as a minority and the ghettos were a place that didn’t provide a high-standard of living. This may also contribute to the phrase “Jew out.” If a person “Jews out” they are not paying a debt to you because they are stingy. This phrase is directly related to the stereotype that Jewish people are very stingy with money. Along these lines is “I got gypped.” This means I was cheated out of some money. This is a from the stereotype that all gypsies are thieves.



The phrase that has seemed to explode as an issue is “that’s gay.” Even though it is so commonly heard, no one seems to have a clear definition. A linguist who studied the usage of “that’s gay” in a grade school found that none of the students knew what it meant; only that it was bad. Other studies asking people what the meaning is have found that it can mean too sincere, weak, boring, odd, weird, dorky, uncool, or stupid. The dictionary definition says that gay in fact means a merry, lively mood or a reference to one’s sexual orientation.

So what’s the big issue? I dare you to go to Facebook and search for “gay.” There are 500+ groups that use “gay” in the title; the majority of which use it in a negative connotation. This has very recently become a huge issue in our high schools, as made evident in the Santa Rosa school district being sued. At Maria Carrillo High School, a student was disciplined for using the phrase “that’s so gay.” Parents are now suing the school district for punitive damages. Students at the school who were being interviewed see the phrase as not being

offensive however the teachers in the school district feel differently as they will not tolerate the students using this phrase. This being brought forth as a legal matter shows the impact phrases like these are having on our society and has begun the questioning of them being socially acceptable.

Colleges have also been taking steps to eliminate potentially offensive phrases through hate speech codes. In 1990, 75 universities had hate speech codes. Within a year, the number increased to 300 and has continued to grow exponentially since. Hate speech codes vary in form. Some codes prohibit speech or conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or even offensive educational environment. Other campuses may ban behavior that could cause emotional distress. Other examples of communication punishable under speech codes include Holocaust denial, racist or sexist speech. Policies that are more stringent include a ban on anything that remotely could be offensive, such as ridicule against another person.

These phrases have made their way into our everyday life. They are heard in kindergarten, in high school, in college, and in the workplace. Some schools are starting the process of weeding out these phrases from our vocabulary, but in the end it is up to each of us to decide what is appropriate for us to be saying. You make the choice, is what I’m saying making sense, or is it gay? 🇺🇸

## FILE SHARING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A PROBLEM LIVING AMONG US

BY DARYL LAWRENCE - MACURH RCC OF MINNESOTA AND SANDM (JANUARY 2007)

File sharing at colleges and universities must necessarily deal with many students living in the residence halls. Residence hall students use school networks most often, whether it is for surfing the web, for fun, or for conducting academic research. At times, students may abuse the privilege of having a high-speed connection in their residence hall room and decide to download some music, movies, or other copyrighted materials from a P2P (peer-to-peer) network such as KaZaA, eDonkey, or any such service. There are legitimate uses of P2P file sharing, but the abuses of the system are what draw attention to the issue.

This issue is not new. Rather, this issue splashed into the American consciousness when Napster was shut down for copyright infringement a half decade ago. Since that time, officials in higher education, the government, and the recording and motion picture industries have taken a hard look at how to curb the excessive abuse of P2P networks for illegal activities.

One of the major misconceptions that college students have is that they think that no one is monitoring their downloading activities. The result is that when consequences do follow their activities, students are taken by surprise that anyone was even paying attention to what they were doing.

By now, it is clear that file sharing via a P2P network, and by extension downloading music and movies on the internet when it hasn’t been paid for, is illegal. There is no way around this statement. It is against federal law to download copyrighted works without the permission of the copyright holder. College students are smart enough to know this, and if not, many schools pour a lot of money into education on the issue.

Many universities and colleges have either policies against illegal file sharing, or at least address the issue in their acceptable use policies. In addition to having these policies available online, a majority of these schools go out of their way to educate their students on the consequences of illegal downloading. This includes poster campaigns, public seminars, and staff training (including resident assistants). Although colleges and universities do not claim liability in copyright infringement cases, they go out of their way to educate their students to prevent them from committing an illegal act.

“Less than three-fourths of the institutions had online-accessible institutional policies that included more than a cursory treatment of copyrighted works; just over one-fourth had policies that treated copyright in some depth, including such issues as exclusive rights and limitations and exceptions to those rights such as fair use. Over 80% of the institutions had online-accessible statements on P2P file sharing, with slightly more than a half of these statements addressing file sharing in some detail in the context of the institution’s stance on P2P. However, less than

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

## LINKS

### Test yourself for hidden racial bias:

[http://www.tolerance.org/hidden\\_bias/index.html](http://www.tolerance.org/hidden_bias/index.html)

### Economic diversity numbers:

<http://tinyurl.com/2g9vzm>

### Get school statistics:

<http://www.collegeboard.org>

### Get higher education news:

<http://www.insidehighered.com>

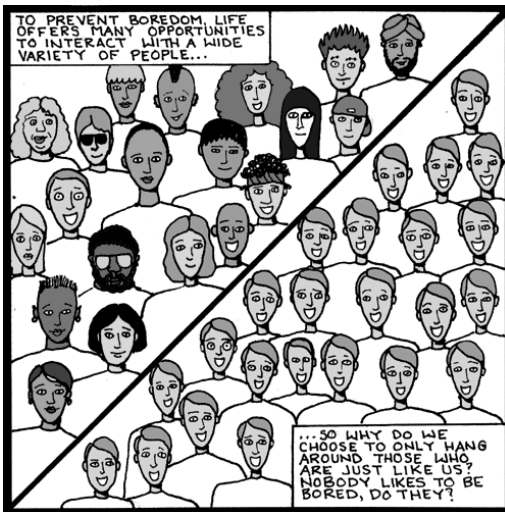
### Diverse Online Magazine:

[www.diverseeducation.com](http://www.diverseeducation.com)

## RHA WEBSITE SPOTLIGHT

### Georgia Tech:

<http://rha.gatech.edu/>



[www.aperfectworld.org](http://www.aperfectworld.org)

### NACURH Task Force on Social and Diversity Issues

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If you have any suggestions, comments, or criticisms feel free to contact us. If you would like to get involved, please e-mail the Task Force Chair.

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Next Issue: To Be Announced



## FILE SHARING IN HIGHER ED (CONTINUED)

20% of detailed online institutional statements on P2P were incorporated into an institutional computer use or copyright policy.”<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, these proactive actions are often fruitless. If a casual poll were taken on almost any campus, every student would respond that he or she has downloaded music online illegally, or knows of someone who has done so. This is a huge problem on campuses nationwide. When the preventative approaches of schools fail, then they must turn to creating reprimands for deviant students.

Schools have the ability to monitor bandwidth usage on their campuses. With this ability, they can pinpoint who is using a lot of bandwidth, which is usually an indication that the person is downloading large files, such as music or movies. If, upon further investigation, the student is found to be illegally downloading copyrighted material, there are a number of ways this student can be punished. The consequences below are school based, as the federal penalties for copyright infringement are a different issue.


The strictest policy found was at the University of Florida.

“The University of Florida’s ICARUS program is a network management tool that also blocks P2P file sharing. It detects any P2P use (even legal use, although adjustments to permit certain authorized uses may be made) and immediately disconnects the user from the network. First-time offenders are shut out for 30 minutes, second offenders for five days, and third offenders are shut out indefinitely and subjected to the school’s judicial process.

Florida reports over a 90% drop in P2P use. Florida includes a notable education component in its ICARUS program: first-time offenders are required to engage in an online tutorial designed to educate the user about copyright law and the potential penalties that can result from unauthorized P2P file sharing. However, some observers have expressed serious concerns about restricting resource use too strictly - the program bars legal P2P use and such legal activities as LAN gaming (i.e. playing computer games over a Local Area Network, or LAN).”<sup>2</sup>

This policy, while being extremely strict, is also extremely effective. By cutting off access to the university’s network, it deters students from downloading again. As stated in the above quote, however, this system may be too restrictive. Legal downloads are considered illegal downloads, and LAN gaming is not possible. Of course, this technology may be amended over time and accommodations may be made.

From that extreme, many other policies do not seem as strict. The most common punishment is being cut off from the school’s network, but there is room for legal downloads to take place. There are not severe punishments for first-time offenders at any school, as the first offense is a perfect opportunity for a warning to be issued. Second time offenders often face expulsion from the school’s network. A second time offender at Harvard is kicked off the school network for a full year.

The only viable conclusion that students must reach is that file sharing isn’t worth it. Schools are looking out for violations and do not hesitate to punish students who commit illegal acts. Colleges and universities are developing ways to restrict file sharing and bandwidth theft on their campuses, and in the not-too-distant future file sharing will be impossible in residence halls. The smartest and best plan of action for students is to purchase music and movies legally. Breaking federal law and school policy isn’t worth the latest song by Fergie. 

**Note:** I utilized an exceptional paper that is cited in my footnotes. I encourage anyone interested in this issue to read it, as I have only given a brief overview of what is included in that document. The actual content of the article is only about six pages long, so it is a very short read. The article also includes links to some schools’ resources relating to P2P file sharing. You can find this article and download it (legally) at the following address:

<http://www.educause.edu/JointCommitteeoftheHigherEducationandEntertainmentCommunitiesTechnologyTaskForce/1204>

<sup>1</sup> Education Task Force of the Joint Committee of the Higher Education and Entertainment Communities. “University Policies and Practices Addressing Improper Peer-to-Peer File Sharing.” American Council on Education. <http://acenet.edu>. March 19, 2004. Accessed December 17, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## THE TASK FORCE

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